

Administrator's Update for 6/8/11
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Charlotte County government has earned a silver certification in the Green Local Government Designation from the Florida Green Building Council (FGBC), after demonstrating green practices in its local government department functions. The FGBC Green Local Government Standard designates green cities and green counties for outstanding environmental stewardship. Our building and growth management department's staff has worked with many other county departments for more than a year to assess their level of "green" awareness and environmentally friendly participation efforts. Staff also encouraged the creation of new programs and practices. It is anticipated that certified green county governments will function in a more efficient manner through better internal communication, cost reductions, and effective risk and asset management.

Bottle-shaped recycling containers

The public works department's solid waste division recently delivered 63 plastic bottle-shaped recycling containers, distributing them to the parks in Charlotte County. Our solid waste division is working with the community services department to enhance and increase recycling in all the parks maintained by Charlotte County. The recycle containers were obtained at no cost to the county with a grant coordinated by Keep Charlotte Beautiful from Waste Management and PepsiCo. The amount of recyclables collected will be reported to Waste Management who, in turn, will take the profits from the sale and donate them to a veterans' organization that assists veterans starting small businesses. The number of bottle-shaped containers was determined after conducting an audit of the parks and identifying the best locations based on use. Locations include Englewood Beach, Port Charlotte Beach complex as well as parks that cater to youth sport activities. Waste Management also delivered four 4-yard yellow top recycle containers to the main collection and consolidation points for the community services staff, to enable them to handle the projected increase in recycling.

Placida Road

The Southwest Florida Water Management District permit has been received, and the Army Corps of Engineers permit is in process for the widening of Placida Road. This project is intended to enhance the corridor for a hurricane evacuation route and proposes to widen Placida Road from two lanes to a four-lane divided roadway, from Rotonda Boulevard West to Cape Haze Drive. It will include curb and gutter, four-foot paved shoulders, and a sidewalk on the east side of the new roadway. The final design plans are in progress. We have started the procedure to acquire the right-of-way needed for the project.

Connecting markets

The Charlotte County Visitors and Convention Bureau is launching a marketing campaign in Knoxville, Tenn., beginning in mid-June and running through September. The campaign includes radio advertising and a Facebook promotion. Members of Knoxville-based media will be invited to visit the destination with anticipation they will write about the area and encourage Knoxville residents to vacation in Charlotte Harbor and the Gulf Islands. This is a test program in one of several lift markets that offer direct air service to Punta Gorda Airport. Allegiant Air is working with the tourism office by providing airfare for the promotion and media and local tourism businesses will be invited to participate in the campaign.

Fire/EMS

Under our existing mutual aid agreements, Charlotte County Fire/EMS department has been working with the Desoto County Fire Rescue to cover areas of north US17 and the Lake Suzy area off Kings Highway. This will help the citizens of Desoto County lower insurance rates for these areas of coverage and maintain our mutual aid agreement.

Two Charlotte County Fire/EMS personnel have just completed their 160-hour hazardous materials technician course from the Sarasota Technical Center. The completion of this course allows these personnel to go on to take the State of Florida hazardous material technician exam to become State certified.

Veteran Services

Veteran Services Officers participated in numerous Memorial Day ceremonies honoring those men and women in the military who have died preserving our freedoms. Activities included the pre-Memorial Day services at El Jobean Park and putting up flags with the Elks Lodge 2153 at both the Douglas T. Jacobson VA Nursing Home and the Royal Pam Assisted Living Facility. Officers also attended Memorial Day services at the Gulf Pines Memorial Park Cemetery, the American Legion Post 113, and Fisherman's Village in Punta Gorda.